

YBSA Monthly Report July, 2009

Education on YRBIWRMA: YBSA is eager to learn about the elements in the Yakima River Basin Integrated Water Resources Management Alternative proposal by the Department of Ecology. YBSA will continue to pursue a comprehensive program that will fulfill the criteria set by Congress that will ensure enough water for the Yakima Basin. Climate change with more frequent droughts will jeopardize the environment and economy of the Yakima Basin.

Work Group Sessions: The first two Work Group sessions were devoted primarily to explanations of the 7 elements DOE proposed to solve the water problems of the Yakima Basin. Explanation of storage, fish passage at existing reservoirs, structural and operational changes, and fish habitat were expanded to include conservation, new storage including an expansion of Bumping Lake, direct pump from the Columbia River. The amount of water needed in the basin and the number of fish each project would generate were not discussed.

Conservation and Enhancement Legislation: Phase II of Title XII the Enhancement Legislation approved in 1994 provides funding annually for conservation projects including special funding for the Yakama Nation and the Wapato Irrigation District. Fish habitat and fish passage, enhancement of water in tributaries, and acquisition of property for habitat are also included in the existing enhancement legislation.

It was pointed out that many of the programs proposed in the Yakima River Basin Integrated Water Resource Management alternative are included in the Title XII Enhancement program and have been funded since 1994 and will continue to be funded in the future.

Storage and Fish Passage: The development of a large amount of stored water, with fish passage at the existing reservoirs, will enhance the fisheries, including introduction of renewed species, prevent droughts, address the possibility of climate change, provide the water for municipal growth, and provide the water necessary to recharge the ground water.

The two items of the elements of the IWRMA the Work Group discussed at length were additional storage and fish passage at existing reservoirs. Comments such as:

- large Bumping Lake option may be problematic for fish agencies,
- flows in the Naches arm need to be addressed to balance flip-flop,
- storage provides value to the Yakama Nation, the Wapato Irrigation Project and fisheries,
- water demand needs to meet 70% reliability,
- the basin does not have an adequate supply of water currently,
- need passage at Lake Cle Elum and Bumping Lake when water supply has been solved.

Discussion so far on additional storage has not identified the additional water needed for fish, irrigation, or municipal use. The presentation on new storage identified in the Yakima River Basin Storage Study dismissed stored inter-basin transfer of Columbia River water, Wymer and Yakima River Pump Exchange as not economically justified. Bumping Lake expansion, Wymer Reservoir, Pine Hollow Reservoir were presented along with ground water storage.

Discussion has to include costs of the project, the amount of water each project would provide, the number of fish that would benefit from the additional water, how long it would take to complete the project, if it's environmentally compatible, and is the project able to be developed.

With more frequent droughts and climate change the Yakima Basin cannot wait to develop a solution.

It was pointed out that the Yakama Nation has irrigation needs as well as fisheries interests and treaty rights need to be honored.

See www.ybsa.org for more information.